

## Issue Paper for Oregon Technical Advisory Committee

<b>Topic:</b>	Oregon Participation in the Farmland Protection Program (FPP)	
<b>Presenter / Sponsor(s):</b>	Bill White, NRCS Leader for Programs FX Rosica, American Farmland Trust	
<b>Issue Statement:</b>	The 2002 Farm Bill has provided nearly a 20-fold increase in the Farmland Protection Program. Oregon has not	
<b>Action Required:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review & Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Advice Requested	<input type="checkbox"/> Information <input type="checkbox"/> Other:: _____
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Historically, Oregon has not participated in FPP. Oregon has relied on strong land use planning laws to conserve farmland in Oregon. The following provides an overview on FPP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compensates landowners wishing to voluntarily limit future development on their land. Landowners maintain many property rights according to the provisions specified in a conservation easement.</li> <li>▪ Conservation easements may be held by state, local, tribal governments or qualified non-governmental organizations.</li> <li>▪ FPP provides matching funds to help purchase conservation easements from interested landowners.</li> <li>▪ All properties enrolled in FPP must have a conservation plan developed based on the standards in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide. Although a minimum 30-year conservation easement is required in FPP, priority is given to applications for perpetual easements.</li> <li>▪ NRCS is designated as the lead agency in implementing this program.</li> </ul> <p>In order for Oregon to qualify for FPP, a state plan and funding request must be submitted to USDA by April 12, 2002. A state plan and funding request does not need to identify specific properties and landowner commitments in Oregon. However, it does require submittal of some basic land-use data and identification of farmland protection needs in Oregon. After the initial request is submitted, the USDA advertises Requests for Proposals in the Federal Register. Each state ranks its proposals and selects its highest priority application for funding.</p>	
<b>Progress / Current Status:</b>	Earlier this spring NRCS, ODA and American Farmland Trust met to explore opportunities to use FPP in Oregon. A draft proposal was developed and discussed with several groups involved with conserving farmland. From this discussion, it was decided that given Oregon's strong land use planning laws further review was needed to ensure that FPP complements, not substitutes, for Oregon's land use planning system. NRCS agreed to collaborate with the American Farmland Trust and other groups of the Oregon agricultural community to identify how FPP can benefit Oregon.	
<b>Technical / Staff Recommendation:</b>	OTAC should form an ad hoc committee to develop a direction for Oregon and the FPP.	
<b>Attachment:</b>		